

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, February 28, 1909, with transcript

Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck, Nova Scotia. Houseboat, (Sunday) Feb. 28, 1909. Mrs. A. Graham Bell, 1331 Conn. Ave., Washington, D.C. Dear Mabel:

I have been looking over De Land's article in the Association Review and note one error he has made on the last page which is of such a nature that I think, in justice to the Census Office, I should correct it. Have therefore written the following note for the Review concerning it but will not send it unless you approve. The last part makes rather funny reading — and perhaps may be out of taste — as flippant. But it Dr Bell to Mrs B makes an awfully good joke all the same. Perhaps it might be better to stop at the end of the second paragraph. What do you say? Have no decent writing paper here so will send this up to Miss McCurdy to be type-written. Have finished the Telephone Book, and have enjoyed enormously fighting my old telephone battles all over again. I can appreciate the strategy on both sides as a mere reader can not. Following is the proposed letter to the Review:—

Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck, N. S. February 27, 1909. Editor of Association Review.  
Dear Sir:

In the February Review (page 12) Mr. Fred De Land, in speaking of the last Census of the Deaf, remarks that I “bore the entire expense incurred in gathering data for which the Census appropriation was no longer available”.

In justice to the Census Bureau allow me to say that I was put to no expense in the matter whatever, and simply contributed my services. Shall I stop here AGB Mr. De Land has taken such pains to make all his statements of fact accurate and reliable; that I am sure he will welcome this correction of a statement which, though literally true, conveys a false impression of the facts in the case.

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“The entire expense incurred in gathering data for which the Census appropriation was no longer available” amounted to nil — and I bore it all!

The statement is therefore true, true and yet at the same time false — a curious combination.

Yours Sincerely, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell.

Of course you will remember that I did incur some expense in connection with the investigation, but this was voluntary upon my part because I was in Beinn Bhreagh at the time and needed help and had not applied to the Census Bureau for assistance which I doubt not would have willingly been given. Indeed on my return to Washington the Bureau detailed two clerks to help me who worked at my own house at Government expense. Then again this was an entirely different thing from “gathering the data” for the Census the expense of which every expert knows must have mounted up into the thousands of dollars. I am not willing to have people credit me with shouldering all this burden, and the Census Bureau will certainly expect me to enter a disclaimer, for if the statement is allowed to go un-corrected, some cantankerous individual in Congress may make trouble for the Director of the Census by claiming that he permitted a private individual to shoulder a public burden, and paid Census clerks for whom Congress appropriates money, out of private funds.

Please let me know at once what you think I better do. To stop at the end of the second paragraph would seem to be ungracious to Mr. De Land — and yet it is sufficient. Shall I put in my little joke? yes! ,

March 1

Have just received the following telegram from Casey:—

Baldwin to Bell

## Library of Congress

Montreal, Feb. 28, 1909 :—Lecture delivered successfully — eleven hundred students —  
Prostrated faculty completely collapsed — Attack Canadian Club tomorrow night.

(Signed) Casey.

Evidently the publicity given to Douglas' flight served as an introduction to Baldwin's lecture. What a scene it must have been. What volumes are expressed by the statement that the faculty collapsed. Hooting, yelling, singing, cheering by eleven hundred students must have constituted a perfect ovation and I have no doubt that the whole student body joined in the chorus of the old student song —

Casey Baldwin, Casey Baldwin, etc.

I am glad Casey has accepted the invitation of the Canadian Club. That is quite an honor for a Canadian, a resident of Toronto. As a rule Canadian clubs invite distinguished foreigners or people from a distance to address them. "A prophet is without honor in his own country", and it is very rarely that a local club makes much of a fuss over people from its own locality.

Conference just over and John is writing for the mail so I must close — with love

Your own Alec

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Houseboat. Sunday, February 28, 1909. Mrs. A. Graham Bell, 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C. Dear Mabel:

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